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CENTRE ASKS STATES TO DISCOURAGE FIRECRACKERS TO CURB POLLUTION

With air pollution levels soaring in many cities, the Union health ministry has shot off a letter to all states, urging them to take preventive steps

STOP STUBBLE BURNING, REDUCE GENSETS USE

In the letter, Director General of Health Services Dr Atul Goel advised state authorities to discourage stubble and waste burning and spread awareness among people about reducing firecrackers during festivities, promoting public transportation, limiting reliance on diesel-based generators, and curbing smoking. The letter noted that air pollution has become a health hazard

CHECK AIR QUALITY BEFORE VENTURING OUT

- The advisory said people in polluted cities must minimise their exposure to polluted air and check the air quality indices before venturing out
- The other preventive measures include avoiding congested areas, and opting for cleaner fuels at home for cooking, heating, and lighting
- Those with pre-existing health conditions must take extra care, it added

0-50

HEALTHY AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI) RANGE. ANYTHING ABOVE THIS IS DEEMED HARMFUL

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DISENGAGEMENT TO BE COMPLETE BY OCTOBER 29

Regular patrolling along Line of Actual Control expected to resume on Oct 30

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

THE disengagement of troops from the two remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh—Depsang and Demchok—is in full swing and is likely to be complete by October 29, sources said. Giving clarity on its progress on the ground, Army sources told this paper on Friday that patrols are likely to resume from October 30.

Both sides are moving fast on the recently reached agreement to de-escalate tensions on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), where Indian and Chinese troops were locked in a face-off since 2020. Explaining the process, sources said temporary structures are being knocked down. Adhering to agreements between the two sides, Indian troops have begun to pull back equipment to rear locations in these areas.

"The tents and shades are being removed with continuous verifications being done. The vehicles are also being shifted back in batches," sources said.

While the agreement between the Corps Commanders was inked on Monday, troops pullout and dismantling of the temporary structures started on Wednesday. The whole process is expected to be completed by next Tuesday. Coordinated patrolling will begin from the next day after ground verification.

"Both sides will inform each other about their patrols to ward off any faceoff and unsavoury incidents. Also, surveillance mechanisms will be set to keep an eye on everything," said sources. Officials said the current batch of agreements is exclusively for the disengagement of Depsang and Demchok and does not talk about patrolling limits and buffer zones in the areas where disengagement has already taken place.

The agreement on Depsang and Demchok is expected to lead to the forces reaching their pre-Galwan positions of April 2020.

The ties between India and China had nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

PATROLLING TROOPS WILL CARRY WEAPONS

For better coordination and smooth operations, each side will inform the other about the size of the patrolling team and the schedule. Also, the patrolling troops will carry weapons including rifles, sources said

BOTH SIDES TO GO BACK TO PRE-'20 SITES

Under the recent agreement, both Indian and Chinese troops will fall back to the positions they had held before April 2020. They will now resume patrolling the same areas they used to do till that date

LOKAYUKTA POLICE QUESTION SIDDU'S WIFE IN MUDA SITE CASE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

THE Lokayukta police on Friday questioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathy in the alleged irregularities in allotment of 14 sites to her by MUDA.

Parvathy Siddaramaiah is accused No 2 in the case. Mallikarjuna Swamy, brother-in-law of Siddaramaiah, was questioned last week.

According to highly placed sources, a team led by Lokayukta Superintendent of Police TJ Udesh questioned Parvathy Siddaramaiah at an undisclosed location in the morning.

An FIR was filed against Siddaramaiah and three others following a special court order to submit a report after conducting an investigation into a complaint filed by activist Snehamayi Krishna of Mysuru.

The sources revealed that Parvathy was interrogated for three hours. The interrogation focused on her decision to return the 14 sites to MUDA, the manner in which sites were allotted and land acquired from her for formation of a residential layout.

The Lokayukta police also questioned her regarding allegations of a sub-registrar visiting her house to complete the land registration and cancellation procedures.

The Lokayukta SP issued a notice on Thursday asking Parvathy to appear in person for questioning. Accordingly, she went to the Lokayukta office around 10.30 am on Friday. She was accompanied by her assistant.

PILGRIMS PANIC

Bomb threats to four hotels in Tirupati

D SURENDRA KUMAR @ Tirupati

A series of bomb threats sent by e-mail to four hotels in Tirupati on Thursday triggered widespread panic in the temple town. The threats targeted three hotels along the Tirumala bypass road and another at Ramanuja Circle, leaving residents and pilgrims anxious.

Under the supervision of Tirupati DSP Venkata Narayana, police teams launched an intensive search operation at the targeted hotels. Special teams, including bomb squads and sniffer dogs, were deployed to inspect each hotel thoroughly. No explosives or suspicious items were found.

Speaking to mediapersons on Friday, DSP Narayana said vigil has been stepped up. He explained that teams have been mobilised to carry out searches and assured the public that no explosives were found during their inspections.

Hotels in the city have been advised to remain vigilant for suspicious activity or unclaimed items. Thousands of people travel to Tirupati every day to offer prayers at the Srivari temple in Tirumala.

10 LAKH NIA bounty for info on Bishnoi's brother Anmol — Anmol is on the agency's radar for his alleged involvement in a firing incident outside actor Salman Khan's residence | P9

Fewer Indians to get visa as Canada cuts target

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

THE muddled Trudeau government has decided to slash its immigrant intake by about 20% from the next year so as to right-size its population.

While Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau had earlier announced he would allow 5 lakh immigrants each in 2025 and 2026, he admitted that after the pandemic, "between addressing labour needs and maintaining population growth, we didn't get the balance right."

As per the new plan, 3.95 lakh new permanent residents will be allowed in 2025, down from 4.85 lakh in 2024. The revised targets for 2026 and 2027 are 3.8 lakh and 3.65 lakh, respectively. The announcement comes months after student visas were cut by almost 35%, as compared to the previous year. Besides, student visas were capped at 3,60,000 for two years.

Cumulatively, Trudeau's announcement is expected to affect Indians in a big way. India had around 3,19,000 students studying in Canada in 2023. The cut in student visas primarily impacted Indians, who constitute more than 41% of Canada's international student population.

In a post on X, Trudeau said, "We're going to have fewer temporary foreign workers in Canada. We're bringing in stricter rules for companies to prove why they can't hire Canadian workers first." This move is expected to complicate job opportunities for immigrants settling in Canada.

As per Statistics Canada, the country had 2.8 million temporary residents, including workers and students, in the second quarter of 2024.

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EXPRESS READ

Guv rushed to hospital with fever, discomfort

Bengaluru: Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot was rushed to Manipal Hospital on Friday after he reported discomfort and fever. Hospital sources said the 76-year-old Gehlot is doing well.

Mining case: Quantum of punishment today

Bengaluru: A special court will pronounce on Saturday the quantum of punishment for seven accused, including Congress MLA Satish Krishna Sail, in connection with the illegal mining case | P5

SCOOPED UP TO SCHOOL!

After the village bridge-cum-barrage got submerged during the recent rain, residents of Upparatti in Gokak taluk used an earthmover to help children cross the river to reach their school. A video of the earthmover ferrying the schoolchildren in its bucket went viral on social media recently

Bharat doesn't own a car, Nikhil's worth ₹107.48 cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hubballi/Bengaluru

SONS of two former chief ministers, who are contesting the November 13 byelections in the state, have revealed some interesting details regarding their assets in their poll affidavits.

While Nikhil, son of HD Kumaraswamy of JDS, owns five swanky cars, Bharat Bommai, son of Basavaraj Bommai of BJP, doesn't even own one.

Both have invested in several companies. Bharat's wife Padakannaya Poornima Ibbani has a Maruti Swift, but Nikhil's wife Revathy M owns no vehicle. Nikhil owns properties worth Rs 107.48 crore.

In his affidavit, Bharat has declared that he owns movable assets worth Rs 3.79 crore and immovable assets worth Rs 5.5 crore. He owns a house in RT Nagar and a flat at Amruthahalli in Bengaluru. He, however, has no agriculture, non-agriculture or commercial properties in his name. But his wife has movable assets worth Rs 3.64 crore and immovable assets worth Rs 2.83 crore. Both have liabilities amounting to Rs 2.32 crore and Rs 1 crore, respectively.

Bharat, who is BJP's Shiggaon candidate, has invested Rs 1.24 crore in six firms as partner. Apart from having bank deposits and investments in the capital market, Bharat has invested Rs 10 lakh in mutual funds. CONTINUED ON: P4

70 drink polluted water in Dharwad dist, fall ill

MALLIKARJUN HIREMATH @ Kalghatgi

MORE than 70 people fell ill after drinking contaminated water at Mutagi village of Kalghatgi taluk in Dharwad district on Wednesday and Thursday.

Ten people are still being treated at the KIMS Hospital in Hubballi and 36 at Kalghatgi taluk hospital. Timely medication helped the rest recover fast, according to sources.

While some started vomiting, others suffered from diarrhea and uneasiness after drinking contaminated water. Deputy commissioner Divya Prabhu has issued an order suspending local Panchayat Development Officer Praveen Kumar Ganni for negligence.

Divya Prabhu, who visited Mutagi, told *TNIE* that three overhead tanks get water from three borewells in the village. Contaminated water from an overflowing lake in the village might have entered one of the uncapped borewells. Water samples have been sent for tests, she said.